

REMARKS

Responsive to the Office Action mailed June 2, 2003, Applicants respond to the sole issue raised therein, namely the requirement to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims should be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable.

As to the first species (Figures 1-19) and third species (Figure 23), note that Figure 23 merely modifies the Figures 1-19 nut 56 and plate 16 substantially as follows. More particularly, Figure 23 raises the outer flange 21a to the same height or slightly higher than the center plateau 26 of the base 16a (thereby forming an upward opening annular groove 160 therebetween, which annular groove has a radially outer wall, or lip, 162 against which bears the annular bottom edge 67a, wherein the nut 56a is screwed down snug against the base 16a. Also, the nut bottom edge 67a is preferably beveled, e.g. rounded, to provide a greater area of contact and less contact pressure between the nut bottom annular edge 67a and the radially outer portion 162 of the upward facing annular groove 160. Thus, the effective seating of the lower annular edge 67a of the nut 56a in the annular groove 160 positively blocks any tendency of the nut 56a, and hence of the post 12, to shift laterally on the base 16a.

In contrast, the Figure 1-19 embodiment, as seen in Figure 14b, rests the annular bottom edge 67 of the nut 56 on the flat, relatively low flange 21 of the base 16 (outer flange 21 being additionally shown in Figures 2 and 3).

Thus, except for the upward opening annular groove 160 and rounding of the annular bottom portion 67a of the nut, the Figure 23 embodiment is otherwise substantially the same as the Figure 1-19 embodiment.

Applicant provisionally elects the Figure 23 embodiment, in the event that no generic claim is found allowable.

Claims 1-11 are canceled without prejudice. Claims 35-56 are added. Claims 29-32 and added Claims 35-43, 45, and 49-51

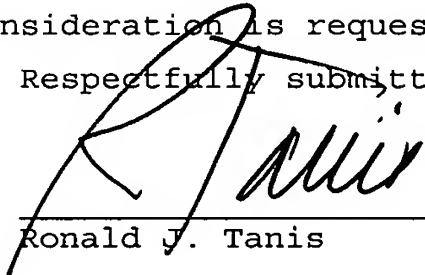
are generic to all species (Figures 1-23). Claims 12-20, 34, 46-40 and 53-55 read on species 1 and 3 (Figures 1-19 and 23). Claim 59 is specific to species 3 (Figure 23).

As to claims not directed to the third (Figure 23) species, Claims 21-28, 33, 44 and 52 are directed to the second (Figures 20-22) species.

Please consider the attached further Information Disclosure Statement.

Further and favorable consideration is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald J. Tanis

RJT/ad

FLYNN, THIEL, BOUTELL
& TANIS, P.C.
2026 Rambling Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-1631
Phone: (269) 381-1156
Fax: (269) 381-5465

Dale H. Thiel
David G. Boutell
Ronald J. Tanis
Terryence F. Chapman
Mark L. Maki
David S. Goldenberg
Sidney B. Williams, Jr.
Liane L. Churney
Brian R. Tumm
Robert J. Sayfie

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